Recommendations for Implementing a Frequent Monitoring Framework in Jordan

Introduction and Context

Since the start of 2016, the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) in Jordan has been working towards the development of a Frequent Monitoring Framework (FMF) to provide a shared framework to monitor the impact and outcomes of the work of the UN family in the country. To support the development of the FMF, REACH has been tasked by the Office of the United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator (UN RC/HC-O) in Jordan to assess and produce a series of recommendations on how such a framework might be structured and how an Information Management System that supports such a framework might be put together. The aim of the Frequent Monitoring Framework is to monitor progress against outcome indicators of the UN(D)AF.

The present paper sets out challenges that were encounw

tered in trying to set up the Frequent Monitoring Framework for the previous UN(D)AF and presents a number of lessons learned for putting in place better data collection and monitoring for the forthcoming UNSDPF. Finally, the recommended tools and structure for such a system are presented.

Challenges

A number of challenges were encountered while trying to set up the FMF for the UN(D)AF in Jordan, specifically:

* Not all indicators in the UN(D)AF were relevant or reflective of UN family programming in Jordan. This meant that some indicators and sources of data selected for the FMF were not directly related to the UN(D)AF.
* Data for many indicators were simply not collected by agencies, and if data was available it was often not comparable – i.e. it was collected on different timeframes and using different forms of disaggregation. Data was much more widely available for output indicators, with outcome indicators not being regularly collected. This was the case even for outcome indicators that would be relatively easy to collect data on.
* There was confusion around outcome and output level data led to a lack of clarity in indicators, with many agencies collecting only output-level data and only presenting this data for inclusion. This led to the dashboards produced being very output-focused, rather than reflecting impact of UN family programming. In some cases there was confusion between outputs and outcomes, with outputs being presented as outcomes and outcome level indicators not being properly represented.
* There was a lack of buy-in from agencies as no clear structure for the management of the FMF was put in place from the outset. While most agencies had focal points that developed over time through their engagement with the FMF, many agencies did not have clear focal persons and thus getting data was difficult.

Lessons Learned

Having undertaken over the previous year efforts to put in place the foundations of such a system, REACH has produced a number of lessons learned around the creation of IMS to support the Frequent Monitoring Framework. The following represent key findings around the creation of a Frequent Monitoring Framework and supporting Information Management System:

* **Agencies should harmonize data collection time periods, tools, and types of disaggregation.** While some differences in the data collected by agency monitoring and evaluation units is understandable and unavoidable, as different agencies operate different M&E frameworks and have different reporting requirements, a basic set of data for UNDAF/UNSDPF monitoring should be agreed across all agencies and operationalized.
* **There should be agreement around the sources of data for outcome-level indicators used in Jordan**. Agreement around the source used for data – Department of Statistics or (for example) Ministry of Labor figures, or agency monitoring such as the WFP-led Comprehensive Food Security Monitoring Exercise – should be secured from the outset to ensure that indicators that are selected are realistic and measurable in the Jordan context.
* **Lead agencies should be selected** to act as the focal agency for each sector. For example, WFP could act as the lead agency for collecting data on food security and entering this data into the FMF. This would avoid the potential duplication of figures.
* **There should be a more definite management structure around the FMF.** This would allow the process to be actively led by the UN family, ensure correct and timely reporting and responsibility for specific activities such as data entry.

Proposed FMF Structure and Tools

Based on the above challenges and lessons learned, REACH would recommend the tools and structure outlined below be adopted for the implementation of the FMF in Jordan. The structure below is based on the challenges and lessons learned derived from REACH’s experience implementing such a system, and aims to overcome these specific challenges by:

* Automating as much of the system as possible
* Giving, as far as possible, clear responsibility and roles at each specific level
* Ensuring agency participation and buy-in at all levels of the FMF, from management to the field level
* Ensuring useful and relevant data

The structure aims to put in place a Frequent Monitoring Framework that presents an online dashboard that reports on different indicators at specific timescales (monthly, quarterly, annually) and that can easily and quickly be updated by agencies. The online dashboard can also be adapted into a document format along with text additions to allow narrative reporting on progress towards indicators.

**Structure**

* **Steering Committee**

A steering committee should be established that comes under the supervision and chairmanship of the UN Resident Coordinator’s Office. The steering committee should consist of a mix of technical and management staff from each agency and will be responsible for overall oversight and guidance of the FMF, ensuring timely reporting from agencies, and ensuring timely outputs and updates to the online dashboard. The steering committee is also responsible for issuing quarterly dashboard documents with narrative commentary on progress towards meeting target indicators in Jordan.

* **Outcome Group Leads**

For each outcome group of the forthcoming UNSDPF, one agency should be appointed as the lead agency on the steering committee. The focal person from this agency is responsible for formulation of indicators for the outcome group and ensuring quality of reporting under that outcome group, along with supporting agencies with reporting and implementing the FMF. Certain specific indicators as agreed upon in the indicator matrix are collated and entered into the FMF platform at the outcome group level – the outcome group agency is responsible for this entry.

* **Agency Focal Points**

A focal point within each agency should be appointed that is responsible for uploading agency data onto the online FMF platform. The agency focal point is responsible for ensuring timely collection and centralisation of FMF data within the agency and uploading this data onto the online FMF platform, and attending steering committee meetings. Agency focal points use agreed upon sources of data to collate the data required for entry into the online dashboard.

* **Technical Support**

An agency or NGO should be assigned to provide technical support to the framework including the online dashboard.

**Tools**

Three key tools have been developed by REACH that structure the Frequent Monitoring Framework and facilitate data gathering and presentation:

**Indicator matrix:** Serves as the underlying, ‘backroom’ document of the FMF

**Online platform:** Facilitates data upload and tracking

**Dashboard:** Presents data in a clear, outward facing manner

The tools are discussed in further detail below:

* **Indicator Matrix**

The indicator matrix presented in Annex A serves as the guiding document for the FMF, providing structure to the data gathering. The indicator matrix presents, grouped by outcome group:

* **Indicator:** The specific indicator itself
* **Indicator explanation:** A glossary providing further definitions where necessary
* **Unit:** The basic unit of counting for the indicator
* **Disaggregation:** Any lines of disaggregation for the indicator, such as gender, age, location, sector
* **Source:** The agreed on source for the indicator, such as DoS figures, UN agency figures
* **Data collection source:** The specific agreed upon source of the data to be collected

Specific indicators have been developed for the monitoring of the current UN(D)AF. These include a mix of current UN(D)AF indicators – although many of these were found not to be relevant to the programming of many agencies. Other indicators were developed during the course of the workshop held with agencies. Indicators for the upcoming UNSDPF should be developed in line with UNSDPF indicator development, allowing scope for additional indicators to be developed as well. A proposed set of indicators, currently in use for the online platform, is presented in Annex 1. However, once SDPF indicators are finalised the FMF steering committee should then move to finalised the indicators to be monitored for the 2018-2022 UNSDPF.

The indicators currently presented in the FMF were agreed upon in the course of a workshop around the Frequent Monitoring Framework. The workshop built buy-in the indicators and aimed to ensure that data is available.

* **Online FMF Platform**

An online platform **has** been developed by REACH using indicators that have been developed for the monitoring of the current UN(D)AF. The platform allows the real-time uploading and visualisation of data. The platform presents only those indicators relevant to each agency and at specific reporting periods. An automated email request is sent to each agency focal point when their indicators require updating at the specified period (monthly, quarterly, or annually). The platform automatically generates and updates an online dashboard, which is discussed below.

* **Dashboard**

Printed dashboards were developed for the previous two rounds of UN(D)AF monitoring, however these faced a number of challenges as discussed above mainly with the comparability and coherency of data. The online dashboard presents a solution to this as it is updated automatically and data is entered in a controlled format.

**Data Gathering**

Data gathering is the primary responsibility of agency focal points and sector lead agencies. Effective and efficient data gathering should involve:

* Agreed upon data collections timeframes and tools. It is preferable for the tool to allow data collection as close to the field level as possible for output indicators, with programme staff aggregating data and providing it to the agency focal point.
* Where possible data collection should use existing sources of data such as DoS figures. The sector lead agency should be responsible for updating these figures were they are used.
* Data collection should aim to be standardised across all agencies, with agreed upon tools and sampling methods used to collect data. Agencies should focus on specific areas of strength, with for example FAO collecting data on agricultural land use and WFP collecting data on nutrition from feeding centres.

**Next Steps**

There are a number of steps that could be taken to develop the FMF beyond the scope of the current project. Further steps that would be beneficial include:

* Developing platforms to allow more direct beneficiary feedback, such as SMS feedback or an app allowing direct input

Annex: A

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| **UNAF Outcome** | **Indicator\*** | **Data source** | **UN Agency with access** | **Means of verification** | **Frequency** | **Geographic Scope** | **Disaggregation (lowest level of representation)** |
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| **Outcome 1 - Enhancing Systemic Reform** | # of trainings provided to enhance government capacities | Agencies providing training records | UNDP, UN Women | Training records, photos, attendence lists | Quarterly | Nationwide | Line ministries, local authorities, geographic units |
| # of national consultation processes conducted engaging civil society and youth | Big data, vox pops, agencies' records | UNDP, UNICEF, UN Women | Reports, national progress | Annually | National | Geographic, governmental sector, community reached |
| # of functional complaint mechanisms established, by governorate | Agency data | UNHCR | Complaints and reports | Monthly | National | Type of complaint, type of action, geographic |
| # of complaints received through established complaint mechanisms | Government, implementing partners | UNHCR | Reports | Monthly | National | Type of complaint, type of action, geographic |
| # of complaints received through established complaint mechanisms and acted upon | Government, implementing partners | UNHCR | Reports | Monthly | National | Type of complaint, type of action, geographic |
| # of women trained on leadership activities | Agencies providing records | UN Women, UNESCO | Training records, reports, attendance lists | Quarterly | National | Geographic, age, sector |
| **Outcome 2 – Ensuring Social Equity** | # of women using multi-sectoral VAW support services | Agency data | UNFPA, UN Women, UNICEF, UNRWA | Records from projects and service centres, government records, interagency IMS | Quarterly | National | Age, governorate, sector |
| % of students who experienced positive alternatives to violent disciplinary action, by governorate | Agency data | UNICEF, UNRWA | Student survey | Quarterly | Governorate | SADD, governorate |
| % of students reported suffering verbal/ physical violence in all government and UNRWA schools | Agency data | UNICEF, UNRWA | Student survey | Quarterly | Governorate | SADD, governorate |
| % of individuals identified as experiencing a protection risk (GBV, child protection and disabilities) provided with assistance | National-level data, Higher Council for Disability, protection data, national tracking system for protection cases | UNICEF, UN Women, UNHCR | Agency uploads to national tracking system | Quarterly | Governorate | SADD, governorate |
| # of microfinance loans provided, disaggregated by sex and age | Agency data | UNDP, UN Women, UNHCR, World Bank, ILO | Records of loans given out | Quarterly | National | SADD, location |
| # of vulnerable provided with vocational training (disaggregated by sex and age) | Activity Info | UN Women, UNESCO, UNHCR, UNFPA | Agency and partner uploads to Activity Info | Quarterly | National | SADD, governorate |
| **Outcome 3 – Equitable Quality Social Services** | % of people provided with quality reproductive health services (disaggregated by sex and age) | Agency data | WHO, UNFPA, UNICEF | Records of services provided | Quarterly | Governorate | SADD |
| # of trainings provided to enhance government capacities in improved service delivery (disaggregated by sector) | Education, health, FSL, protection cluster | WFP, UNDP, ILO, UN Women, UNDP | Agency and partner records | Quarterly | Governorate | Sector |
| # of people benefitting from improved service delivery (disaggregated by sector, sex and age) | Education, health, FSL, protection cluster | WFP, UNICEF, UNDP, UNHCR | Agency and partner records | Quarterly | Governorate | Sector, SADD |
| # of people (disaggregated by sex and age) accessing clinics providing quality health services as per established standards | Agency data | WHO, UNHCR, UNICEF | Records of visits to clinics and other medical centres | Quarterly | Governorate | SADD |
| # children enrolled in government and UNRWA schools | Agency data | UNESCO, UNICEF, UNRWA | EMISS | Annually | Governorate directorates | SADD, grade, nationality |
| # of children benefitting from provision of schools meals in government schools | Agency data | WFP, UNRWA | Records of receiving meals | Quarterly | Governorate and directorates | SADD |
| **Outcome 4 – Investing in Young People** | # of youth reached in engagement and civic initiative activities (disaggregated by age to streamline to 15-24 years, also what is engagement and civic initiatives?) | NGO records, UNICEF records, Ministry of Youth records | UNICEF | Activity reports, attendence sheets | Quarterly | National | Geographic, sectoral |
| % of unemployed Jordanians aged 15 years and above, by sex and governorate | Government records | DoS, MoL | Employment monitoring | Quarterly | National | Geographic, age |
| % of Jordanians aged 15 years and above, by sex and governorate, participating in the labour force | Government records | DoS, MoL | Employment monitoring | Quarterly | National | Geographic, age |
| # of companies engaging with TVET graduates | Survey of TVET grads, survey of companies | UNRWA, UNICEF | TVET centres records | Quarterly | National | Sector, gender, geography |
| % of graduates employed from UN TVET centers, within 2 years of graduation (disaggregated by sex) | TVET center surveys | UNRWA, UNICEF | TVET center records, DoS records | Annually | National | SADD, sector, geography |
| **Outcome 5 – Preserving the Environment** | # of municipal authorities assisted with Disaster Risk Reduction capacity building trainings | Agency data | UNDP, FAO | Agency reords | Quarterly | Governorate | Governorate |
| Tonnes of hazardous waste disposed of safely | Agency data | UNDP | Records of disposal | Quarterly | Governorate | Governorate |
| # of Green Economy Projects implemented in each Governorate | JORISS | UNEP, UNDP | JORISS | Quarterly | Governorate | Governorate |
| # HH directly benefitting from promotion of sustainable water solutions projects | Agency data | UNDP | Project reports | Quarterly | Governorate | Governorate |
| Hectares of land preserved through planting of trees in collaboration with MoA | Government and agency data | WFP | MoA records | Monthly and quarterly | Governorate | Type of land and coverage |
| **Outcome 6 – Refugee response** | # of 5-17 y/o children enrolled in informal and non-formal education | Activity Info | UNICEF, UNESCO for some types | Education Management Informmation System, data collected by UNICEF | Quarterly | Governorate | SADD, governorate |
| # of 5-17 y/o children enrolled in formal education (camps and host communities) | Activity Info | UNESCO, UNICEF | Education Management Informmation System, data collected by UNICEF | Annually | Governorate | SADD, governorate |
| Food Consumption Score, disaggregated by sex of HH head | Agency data | WFP, IOM | Records from food distributions, CFSME | Quarterly | Governorate | SADD, governorate |
| # of functional referral systems in host communities and camps | Agency data | UNHCR | Records of referral systems | Quarterly | Governorate | N/A |
| # of protection cases that were reported through refugee hotline services that are receiving assistance | Agency data | UNHCR | Helpline dashboard | Quarterly | Governorate | SADD, governorate |
| # of refugees employed in Cash for Work and through work permits | Agency data | WFP, UNHCR, MoI, MoL, ILO | Activity info, records of CfW, national level data | Quarterly | Governorate | SADD, governorate |